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ABSTRACT

The Ainsworth School Spanish Partial Immersion Program (Portland, Oregon) was established in 1987 to provide an elementary foreign language magnet program to children in the district. The program's major goals are bilingual proficiency and increased understanding of the second language culture. During 1989-1990, the program enrolled 205 students in kindergarten through grade 3. Students were taught mathematics, social studies, and some language arts in Spanish for half the day and were taught reading, language arts, and science in English during the other half. Participating students made normal progress in achieving district curricular objectives and in developing skills in understanding, speaking, reading, and writing Spanish. Student achievement exceeded the district average in reading, mathematics, and language usage by grade 3. The initial lag in first language skills was short-lived. The program appears to have stimulated basic skills development, especially in mathematics. Parent interviews suggest that the program sustained parent involvement. Program continuation and expansion are recommended, with six specific additional recommendations for curriculum refinement, student monitoring, improved Spanish language objectives and assessment, maintaining student diversity, and participant tracking. A sample class curriculum schedule, parent questionnaire, and summary of parent questionnaire responses are appended. (MSE)

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# PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# SPANISH PARTIAL IMMERSION PROGRAM

# 1989-90 EVALUATION REPORT

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**October 1990**

**Department of Research and Evaluation**
**Portland Public Schools**
**Portland, Oregon**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### SPANISH PARTIAL IMMERSION PROGRAM
### 1989-90

The Ainsworth School Spanish Partial Immersion Program was established in 1987. The purpose of the program was provide an elementary foreign language magnet program in the Spanish language to children from all areas of the district. The rationale behind the language immersion program was that children learn a second language more easily when the foreign language is used to teach other academic subjects, rather than teaching the foreign language as a separate subject.

The major goal of the program is bilingual proficiency and increased understanding of the culture of the second language. Specifically, the program goals state that students will be able to maintain normal progress in achieving the objectives of the district's curriculum in all subjects, understand Spanish spoken at normal conversational rates, develop proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing Spanish, and develop an understanding and appreciation of other cultures.

During 1989-90, the Spanish Partial Immersion Program enrolled 205 students in grades kindergarten through grade three. Student were "immersed" in Spanish for half the day and the other half of the day, classes were taught in English. During the Spanish part of the day, students were instructed in mathematics, social studies, and some language arts; in the English segment, students learned reading, more language arts, and science.

This evaluation report described the third year of program implementation and presents basic skills achievement outcomes for participating students. Students in the Spanish Partial Immersion Project maintained normal progress in achieving the objectives

of the district's curriculum, as well as developing proficiency in understanding, speaking, reading, and writing Spanish. Student achievement exceeded the district average in reading, mathematics, and language usage by third grade. The initial lag in the development of first language skills, seen in other immersion programs, was short-lived in this program. The program seems to have stimulated the students' basic skills development, especially in the area of mathematics. The emerging language capabilities of students in Spanish enriched their cognitive development in both languages. Interview data from parents suggest that the program was effective in sustaining parent involvement.

It is recommended that the Spanish Partial Immersion Program be continued and expanded as planned, and that: 1) the program continue to develop, refine, and implement a curriculum for Spanish language acquisition; 2) the program continue to monitor student progress annually in achieving objectives of the district's curriculum in English language basic skills in grades three through five; 3) the program establish and implement methods to monitor student progress annually in Spanish oral language acquisition in grades one through five; 4) the program continue to work towards setting annual expectations for student progress and oral language acquisition in Spanish and that after these goals are defined, the immersion program committee should begin to identify more extensive procedures for assessing Spanish language acquisition at the middle school level in preparation for the expansion of the program into middle school; 5) the program continue to select students to ensure a student population that is representative of the different gender and ethnic groups in the district; and 6) the program identify a contact person to maintain the Spanish immersion student data which tracks information on immersion students, such as student name, entry date, leave date, gender, ethnic group, and population group.

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## INTRODUCTION

As requested by the Portland Public Schools' Board of Education in 1989, the Research and Evaluation Department continued the evaluation study of the Spanish Partial Immersion Program during the 1989-90 school year. The second language educational program was in the third year of implementation and enrolled students in kindergarten through grade three. The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of evidence collected in the evaluation regarding the nature, character, and degree of academic proficiency in the first language of English and in the second language, Spanish.

Immersion programs are not new. Since the early 60's, immersion and partial immersion programs have spread across Canada and the United States and have made innovative and important contributions to education in a second language and bilingualism. The programs are based on the theory that early learners can readily adapt to and gain second language skills by being immersed in the second language and culture. The immersion concept developed rapidly because it offers a more authentic and effective approach to teaching a second language in elementary schools.

Research on second language immersion programs suggests several key features of the model: 1) the second language is used for the delivery of subject matter instruction, such as math and social studies, 2) second language learners benefit from instruction especially prepared and designed for their developing levels of proficiency in the second language, 3) immersion students gain an *additive bilingualism* which in effect adds a new language (in this case, Spanish) to their native first language, 4) immersion programs require a commitment of five to six years duration because acquiring a second language is a gradual process, and 5) parents play a pivotal role in establishing immersion programs and providing ongoing support for students (Snow, 1987). The current generation of immersion programs aims to demonstrate that while students are learning basic academic skills, they can also acquire a second language and gain respect for a new culture (Chamot

and Kupper, 1989). Immersion teachers believe that this natural approach to language acquisition offers faster, more efficient, and ongoing support for students' learning a second language (Arnau, 1989).

Figure 1 describes the four stages of second language acquisition that students go through in the pursuit of fluency in a second language (Johns, 1988).

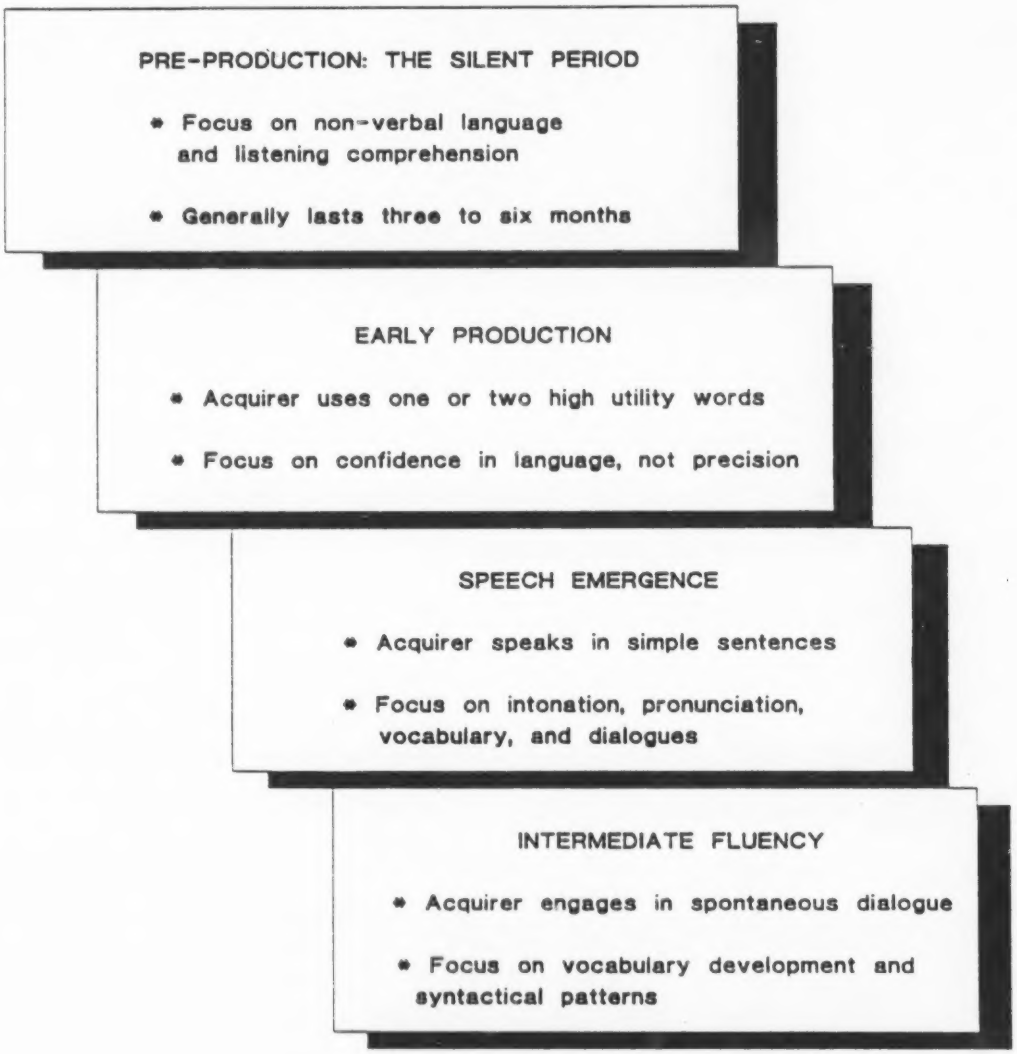
PRE-PRODUCTION: THE SILENT PERIOD
* Focus on non-verbal language and listening comprehension
* Generally lasts three to six months
EARLY PRODUCTION
* Acquirer uses one or two high utility words
* Focus on confidence in language, not precision
SPEECH EMERGENCE
* Acquirer speaks in simple sentences
* Focus on intonation, pronunciation, vocabulary, and dialogues
INTERMEDIATE FLUENCY
* Acquirer engages in spontaneous dialogue
* Focus on vocabulary development and syntactical patterns

Figure 1. Four Stages of Second Language Acquisition

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Ainsworth Elementary School in the Lincoln Cluster houses the Spanish Partial Immersion Program. The program is one of two foreign language magnet programs in the District; one Spanish and one Japanese. The Portland program is called partial immersion because students are "immersed" in their second language, Spanish, for only half the day, the other half of each day, classes are taught in English. English-speaking children learn naturally to speak, read, write and understand Spanish by hearing and using it constantly in normal classroom activities. A significant feature of the program is the special relationship between the staff and students. Staff members provide timely, personalized encouragement and attention as students strive to understand both the new instructional content and the second language.

The Spanish program began in the fall of 1987 with two full-day kindergarten and two first grade classes. Subsequent years have maintained two classes at each grade. Each year one grade level will be added until the program serves Kindergarten through grade five in 1991-92. During 1989-90, the program served 205 Kindergarten through grade three students in the third year of the program.

Program Goals. The major goal of the program is to develop bilingual proficiency for all participants and increase their understanding of the culture of the second language. Specifically, the program has four goals:

- To provide a second language magnet program in which students maintain normal progress in achieving the objectives of the district's curriculum.
- To understand Spanish spoken at normal conversational rates.
- To develop proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing Spanish.
- To develop an understanding and appreciation of other cultures.

Population. The program enrolled 205 children in 1989-90; 52 in Kindergarten, 52 in first grade, 49 in second grade, and 52 in third grade. New students were randomly selected from throughout the District based on parent applications to the program. The program maintained a balance of students by sex, Ainsworth attendance area, Spanish-speaking or Hispanic heritage students, and the District population at large.

Curriculum and Instruction. Classes were taught by grade level teams with one teacher teaching in Spanish and one in English. Each teacher is responsible for half the day instruction to two classes at her grade level. During the Spanish portion of the day, students were instructed in mathematics, social studies, and some language arts; in the English segment, students learned reading, more language arts, and science. Appendix A presents sample class curriculum schedules for each grade.

The immersion classes were based on District curriculum frameworks and incorporated district-adopted texts and materials. Thus, students received instruction in reading, language arts, math, science, social studies, physical education, music, art, and library skills. Additional materials written in Spanish or about Hispanic cultures and consistent with district and program goals were developed by the staff. The classroom programs featured an eclectic, materially-rich and experiential environment typical of traditional and developmentally appropriate early childhood programs.

Staff and Resource Support. In 1989-90, eight teachers (four Spanish-speaking and four English-speaking) instructed students. Four Spanish-speaking educational assistants supported the Spanish part of the program. The teachers met regularly to ensure a consistent educational environment for students. The program did not require special FTE staffing, except for the Spanish-speaking educational assistants. The District's Curriculum staff and the Cluster's Instructional Specialist provided resource support for the teams.

## THE EVALUATION STUDY

Evaluation Questions. The study explored five questions identified in discussions with the Director of Instruction and the school principal. The evaluation questions were:

1. What was the composition of program students by grade, sex, ethnicity, and special population groups (citywide magnet, Ainsworth area, and Hispanic)?

2. What were the reasons and rate of student attrition?

3. How did parents participate in program activities?

4. What was student achievement in English basic skills?

5. What was student achievement in Spanish language acquisition? Did students show increased knowledge of the second language and culture?

Methods. Data collecting methods were designed to answer the evaluation questions in the most appropriate manner. Methods included student achievement test data analysis, staff interviews, classroom observations, a parent questionnaire, a student attitude survey, and a review of the literature on immersion programs. Student achievement was measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) in reading and mathematics for students in grades one and two and the Portland Achievement Levels Tests (PALT) in reading, mathematics, and language usage in grade three.

## ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

This report presents an analysis of the findings related to the evaluation questions and describes the demographics of the Spanish Partial Immersion Program students during the 1989-90 school year. The findings are presented according to the evaluation questions listed above.

**Student Demographics**

During 1989-90, 205 students in kindergarten through grade three participated in the Ainsworth School Spanish Partial Immersion Program. Each grade enrolled approximately 50 students with two classes per grade level.

Table 1 presents the distribution of Spanish Partial Immersion students by grade level and population category. Population categories included (1) general PPS citywide magnet students, (2) students from the Ainsworth School attendance area, and (3) students from Hispanic background or heritage. Again in 1989-90, the program used a space allotment formula which was developed in the first year of the program to determine the student population. Of the 52 available slots per grade level, 26 spaces were allocated for PPS citywide magnet students, 16 spaces were designated for Ainsworth attendance area students, and 10 slots were allotted for students of Hispanic background. The program maintained this approximate enrollment pattern with 59.0% citywide PPS magnet students (n=121), 21.5% Ainsworth attendance area students (n=44), and 19.5% students of Hispanic cultural background (n=40).

**Table 1**
**Distribution of Spanish Partial Immersion Students**
**by Grade and Population Category, 1989-1990 (n=205)**

| Grade | Citywide Magnet | Ainsworth | Hispanic |
|---|---|---|---|
| K | 30 | 12 | 10 |
| 1 | 30 | 12 | 10 |
| 2 | 30 | 11 | 8 |
| 3 | 31 | 9 | 12 |
| Total | 121 | 44 | 40 |

Table 2 presents the distribution of Spanish immersion students by grade and by gender. Overall, there were more females (54.1%) than males (45.9%) in the program. Kindergarten to grade three enrollment in the district was 48.4% female and 51.6% male.

**Table 2**
**Distribution of Spanish Partial Immersion Students by Grade and Gender, 1989-1990**

| Grade | Male | Female | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| K | 24 | 28 | 52 |
| 1 | 27 | 25 | 52 |
| 2 | 20 | 29 | 49 |
| 3 | 23 | 29 | 52 |
| Total | 94 | 111 | 205 |

Figure 2 displays the overall percentage of Spanish Partial Immersion students by ethnic group. Approximately 68% of the students were majority students and 32% were minority students. This ratio has remained constant since the first year of the program.

**Figure 2. Distribution of Ethnic Groups 1989-1990**

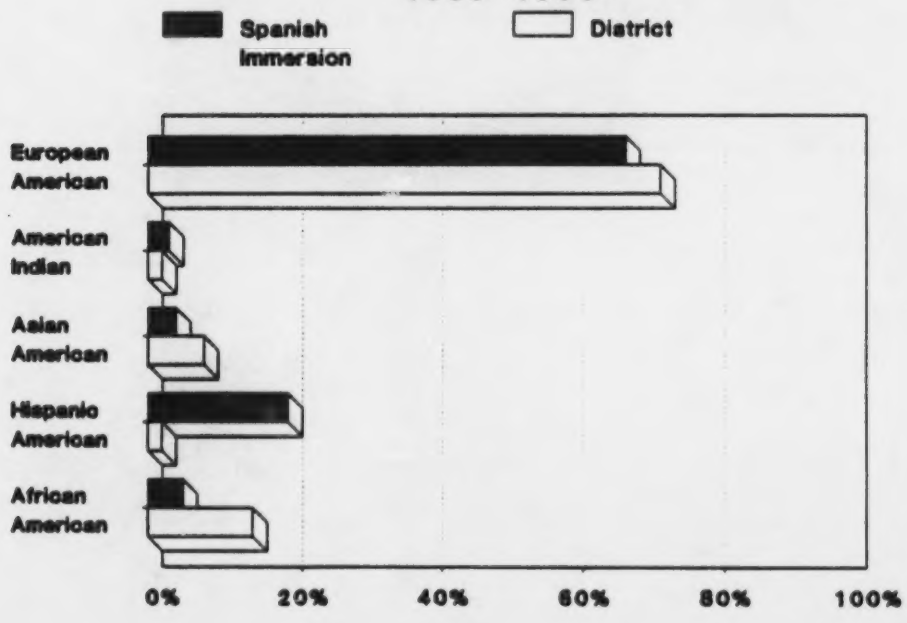

Table 3 presents the number of Spanish Immersion students by ethnicity and grade. The demographics of the immersion program, with a minority student population of 32% (3% American Indian, 5% African American, 4% Asian American, and 20% Hispanic American) differ from the district as a whole which has a 27% minority student population (2% American Indian, 15% African American, 8% Asian American, and 2% Hispanic American). The immersion program had a higher percentage of Hispanic students and fewer African American and Asian American students than the district representation.

**Table 3**

**Distribution of Spanish Partial Immersion Students by Grade and Ethnic Group, 1989-1990 (n=205)**

| Grade | American Indian | European American | African American | Asian American | Hispanic American |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | 1 | 38 | 1 | 2 | 10 |
| 1 | 3 | 32 | 2 | 5 | 10 |
| 2 | 1 | 36 | 4 | 0 | 8 |
| 3 | 1 | 33 | 4 | 2 | 12 |
| Total | 6 | 139 | 11 | 9 | 40 |

**Student Attrition**

The rate of student attrition was 1% for students enrolled in the Spanish immersion program during 1989-90; only three students left the program (one first grader and two second graders). Reasons given by parents for removing their children from the program included the family's move out-of-state (2) and the family's move to another school in the district (1). In the first two years of the program, 1987-88 and 1988-89, the attrition rate was approximately four to five percent. Experience and rigorous initial student selection

and assessment procedures have stabilized student enrollment and turnover in the Spanish Partial Immersion Program.

The Spanish Partial Immersion Program received 170 applications for new Kindergarten students for the 1989-90 school year. Student selection was based on the application form, preschool records, and results of the Early Screening Inventory (ESI), if needed. As we have learned, program spaces at all grades are allocated for three population groups: citywide magnet students, Ainsworth attendance area students, and students of Hispanic cultural background. In 1989-90, as in previous years, the number of Kindergarten applications for each population category exceeded the number of spaces allotted for each group. Thus, a lottery was held to assign students to the available spaces. The lottery assigned all students a rank order by category on the selection list. Students were chosen based on their priority rank on the selection list until all the category slots were filled. The rest of the students on the rank list were placed on a waiting list. The average number of students on the kindergarten through grade three waiting list during 1989-90 was 110 students.

When vacancies occurred in the program at any grade, new students were selected from the next names on the waiting list from the same population category. For example, if a Hispanic student in grade three left the program, the principal would attempt to fill the vacancy with another student of Hispanic background at that grade level. New students in grades one, two, and three were carefully selected from the waiting list. In the future, if vacancies occur due to attrition, new students in grades two through five will be chosen based on an interview and assessment of Spanish language proficiency to verify the students would make a satisfactory transition into the immersion program. During 1989-90, one second-grade student returned to the program after an extended trip to South America, but no new students were admitted to the program in grades one through three.

**Parent Involvement**

Information on parent involvement was available from three sources: parent volunteer records, attendance logs of parent Spanish classes, and a parent questionnaire.

The number of volunteers in the Spanish Partial Immersion Program totaled 138 parents during 1989-90. These parents volunteered approximately 2285 hours on school and immersion program activities or about half of all hours volunteered in the school. The volunteer assistance included the following categories: 6 instructional volunteers, 68 resource/enrichment volunteers, 11 school organization volunteers, 9 advisory volunteers, 6 mentors, and 38 other support services provided by parent volunteers.

Elective Spanish language classes for parents of children in the program were held on Wednesday evenings from October through May. The classes began during the first year of the program with the goal of providing parents with some exposure to the Spanish language and culture which would help them support their children's use of Spanish. In 1988-89 and 1989-90, parents asked the instructor to add an advanced class to allow them to extend their language learning. Accordingly, the instructor offered two levels of instructional Spanish classes -- a beginning level for parents new to the program and an advanced level for parents wanting to continue their progress in Spanish. The school paid the cost of the beginning Spanish class; parents paid for the advanced class themselves.

Table 4 shows the number of parents who participated in the beginning level Spanish classes during the first term of 1989-90. Initially, interest and attendance were high for the first three or four weeks, but later, attendance dropped to an average of fifteen parents who regularly attended the classes throughout the school year. In the advanced class, about eight parents regularly attended the instructional Spanish class.

**Table 4**

**Parent Participation in Elective Spanish Classes, 1989-90**

| Week 1 | Week 2 | Week 3 | Week 4 | Week 5 | Week 6 | Week 7 | Week 8 | Week 9 | Week 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 30 | 27 | 24 | 19 | 15 | 16 | 15 | 14 | 12 | 15 |

A questionnaire was sent to parents of children in the Spanish Partial Immersion Program in May 1990 asking their perceptions of and involvement with the school program. The initial parent questionnaire was sent home with K-3 students; a follow-up questionnaire was mailed to parents two weeks later. The survey obtained an overwhelming response rate of 97% or 199 parents who responded to the questionnaire. This response is certainly evidence of the strong parental interest and involvement in the Spanish Partial Immersion Program. Appendix B presents the parent questionnaire.

Parents enthusiastically supported the Spanish Immersion Program. Of the parents who responded to the survey, 83% were very satisfied with their child's progress in learning Spanish, 88% felt their child was comfortable about being in the Spanish Immersion Program, and 75% were optimistic that their child would be bilingual by the end of fifth grade. Approximately 77% of the parents visited their child's classroom during the 1989-90 year. An impressive 91% of parents complimented the school on the excellent communications provided by teachers and staff, including the school newsletter (91%), parent/teacher conferences (87%), notes from teachers (80%), phone calls from teachers (55%), and other parent/student/staff activities (41%). Interestingly, about 23% of the parents speak Spanish themselves, 44% understand enough to get by, and 33% do not speak any Spanish. Parents offered the following positive comments about their perceptions of the Spanish Partial Immersion Program.

*The program has exceeded our expectations! We are especially pleased with our child's enthusiasm for the language. Keep up the good work!*

*Parent/teacher/child/community functions, like the Pierora Majico play, are an extremely effective means of teaching cross-cultural acceptance and bilinguality.*

*Our family loves the emphasis on respect for other cultures and the Spanish songs. This is an excellent opportunity for my child.*

*Thank you for giving our child pride in his Hispanic heritage.*

*Si, estoy muy contenta, pues asi mi hija puede leer y escribir el espanol. Ya que hablar espanol ella lo habla stude que empieso hablar. Gracias. I am very happy my child can read and write Spanish. Now that she is speaking Spanish, I am starting to speak it too. Thank you.*

*I'm so happy to be a part of this exciting and unique program. It is excellent. Bravo to the wonderful teachers and staff!*

On the opposite side, the survey defined three issues of special interest to parents. First, parents were interested in continuing the Spanish Immersion Program through middle school and high school. Planning for the articulation between the elementary and middle school program is well underway with a committee and parent involvement. The District supports the continuation of the program to ensure the ongoing development of students' fluency in the second language. A second issue addressed by parents was the need to expand the instructional focus to include a broader range of Hispanic cultures, such as Spain, Costa Rica, and Cuba. The current program seems to emphasize Mexican culture and heritage. Third, a small, but vocal group of parents reported they volunteered to help with school activities, but were never called upon. It bothered this group that the school had asked for their help, but did not follow-up and use their services. The school might consider asking the volunteer coordinator to follow-up with parents who are willing to volunteer services to ensure that they will be used in meaningful ways.

Parent were actively involved in school functions. Parent/teacher conferences were attended by 86% of the parents. More than 60% of the parents attended back-to-school night, the all-school picnic, and served as a parent volunteer in the school. Approximately 25% of the parents were involved in the PTA and the optional Spanish classes for parents.

Table 5 on the next page presents the results of the questionnaire relating to the parents' perceptions of the instructional program and their satisfaction with the program. Parents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the program on a five-point rating scale and the average rating was calculated for each item. Parents indicated strong satisfaction with all aspects of the Spanish Partial Immersion Program and very positive satisfaction that the Immersion Program experiences helped their children. Appendix C summarizes the parents' responses.

**Student Achievement - English**

This section summarizes student achievement in English. Achievement measures were determined by those most appropriate for grades one and two, and for grade three.

Achievement in Grades 1 and 2. Students in grades one and two in the Spanish Partial Immersion Program took the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) to measure student achievement in reading and mathematics during fall 1989 and spring 1990.

Table 6 summarizes the ITBS test scores and achievement gain in normal curve equivalent (NCE) and percentile scores. The first grade students began the year above the national average of the publisher's nationally normed sample in reading and math. In spring, they were above the national norm in mathematics, but had lost some ground in reading and were slightly below the national average. The second grade students began

**Table 5**
**Parents' Perceptions of the Program (n=199)**

ITEM

1. How satisfied are you with you child's progress in learning Spanish?

| | Very Satisfied | | | | Not Satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | 88 | 78 | 27 | 5 | 1 |
| % | 44% | 39% | 14% | 2% | 1% |

2. How satisfied are you with the basic skills program offered to your child?

| | Very Satisfied | | | | Not Satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | 83 | 81 | 27 | 7 | 1 |
| % | 42% | 40% | 14% | 3% | 1% |

3. How satisfied are you with other program components (music, physical education, library skills)?

| | Very Satisfied | | | | Not Satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | 89 | 86 | 18 | 4 | 2 |
| % | 45% | 43% | 9% | 2% | 1% |

4. How optimistic are you that your child will be bilingual by the end grade 5?

| | Very Optimistic | | | | Not Optimistic |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | 86 | 63 | 32 | 11 | 7 |
| % | 43% | 32% | 16% | 5% | 4% |

5. How comfortable is your child about being in the Spanish Immersion Program?

| | Very Comfortable | | | | Not Comfortable |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | 116 | 59 | 18 | 2 | 4 |
| % | 58% | 30% | 9% | 1% | 2% |

6. My child feels good about school.

| | Strongly Agree | | Undecided | | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | 96 | 74 | 22 | 4 | 3 |
| % | 48% | 37% | 11% | 2% | 2% |

7. I am satisfied with the Spanish Immersion instructional program.

| | Strongly Agree | | Undecided | | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | 94 | 71 | 30 | 2 | 2 |
| % | 47% | 36% | 15% | 1% | 1% |

the year at the national average in reading and above it in mathematics. In spring, they made sound gains in both subjects and were above the national average. Overall, the gain scores indicate that first and second grade students made larger gains in mathematics than the national average, but made smaller gains in reading. This pattern of gains is consistent with findings from immersion programs in other school districts (Genesse, 1984; Swain, 1984; Howe, 1983) in which primary grade students exhibited an initial "lag" in the development of first language skills.

**Table 6**

**Student Achievement on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)**
**Grade 1 and 2, 1989-90**

| Skill Area | N | Fall 89 NCE | Spr.90 NCE | NCE Gain | Fall 89 Percentile | Spr.90 Percentile | Percentile Gain |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GRADE 1 | | | | | | | |
| Reading | 51 | 53.9 | 42.8 | -11.1 | 55.4 | 40.4 | -15.0 |
| Math | 51 | 53.9 | 64.7 | 10.8 | 56.4 | 71.0 | 14.6 |
| GRADE 2 | | | | | | | |
| Reading | 49 | 49.6 | 51.9 | 2.3 | 48.8 | 52.5 | 3.7 |
| Math | 49 | 60.2 | 67.6 | 7.4 | 62.9 | 73.2 | 10.3 |

Achievement in Grade 3. Students in grade three took the Portland Achievement Levels Tests (PALT) in reading, mathematics, and language usage during fall 1989 and spring 1990. Mean achievement gains of the Spanish Immersion students were compared with mean achievement gains of third graders districtwide. For both groups, only clear and intact group scores were used; these are student groups who had valid test scores *in the same school* and in *both fall and spring*. Results from these clear and intact groups provide the soundest information for assessing student progress in an instructional year.

Table 7 displays the results of the comparative analysis of the student achievement of Spanish Immersion and Districtwide students in grade three as measured by the PALT, including RIT means, RIT gains, deviation scores, and standardized residuals. Overall, the Spanish Partial Immersion grade three students gained significantly more than third graders districtwide in reading, mathematics, and language usage.

**Table 7**

**Student Achievement on the Portland Achievement Levels Tests (PALT)**
**Grade 3, 1989-90**

| Skill Area | N | Fall 89 RIT Mean | Spring 90 RIT Mean | 1989-90 RIT Gain | Fall 89 Deviation | Spring 90 Deviation | Standard. Residual |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| READING | | | | | | | |
| Span.Immers. | 47 | 198.9 | 210.7 | 11.8 | 1.55 | 2.06 | 2.02 * |
| District | 3466 | 191.2 | 199.0 | 7.8 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| MATH | | | | | | | |
| Span.Immers. | 48 | 192.7 | 211.8 | 19.1 | 1.12 | 2.28 | 2.99 * |
| District | 3562 | 187.8 | 200.6 | 12.8 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| LANGUAGE | | | | | | | |
| Span.Immers. | 48 | 197.3 | 209.3 | 11.9 | 1.34 | 1.88 | 2.32 * |
| District | 3460 | 190.5 | 199.7 | 9.2 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |

* Standardized residuals >.50 are considered educationally meaningful.

The following descriptions of terms may help with the interpretation of the results: 1) *RIT scores* are continuous, equal interval curriculum-based scores obtained from PALT which show a level of basic skills achievement on a scale from approximately 140 to 280 spanning grades three through eight; 2) *RIT gain* is the amount of difference between fall and spring RIT means; 3) *Deviations* are group statistics showing the deviation of a group

mean from a mean of all group RIT means in the district; and 4) *Standardized residuals*[1] are gain scores based on the entering fall level of the students and derived from the actual performance of all students in the District in that instructional year.

Figure 3 illustrates the 1989-90 student RIT gains in reading, mathematics, and language usage in grade three. The scatterplots show how students at various achievement levels grew between fall and spring testing. Students are grouped into five achievement categories--very low, low, average, high, and very high--based on their Fall 1989 scores.[2] Each triangle represents a student and contains information on 1) the student's fall level of achievement, 2) their spring level of achievement, and 3) the category of the student's fall achievement level. Two diagonal reference lines show the average Fall to Spring gain for grade three students by subject. The dashed line is the Districtwide average gain; the solid line is the program average gain for grade three students. Comparing the two reference lines shows that students in the Spanish Immersion Program achieved higher gains than similar level students in the rest of the District in reading, mathematics, and language usage. Students in the low and average categories gained more than students in the high and very high categories, compared to similar level students in theDistrict.

Figure 4 shows the 1989-90 program RIT gains by subject in grade three. The graphs summarize the progress of the Immersion Program on the Portland Achievement

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[1] Readers unfamiliar with residual scores should know that this gain score is determined from the relationship between the amount of gain made between fall and spring and the fall achievement level. Based on this relationship, a gain for a group of students is calculated from their fall achievement and compared with the actual gain of the population. The difference between the actual and calculated gains is called the residual. A positive standardized residual indicates that the group's actual gain was greater than the gain of other groups with the same fall achievement level.

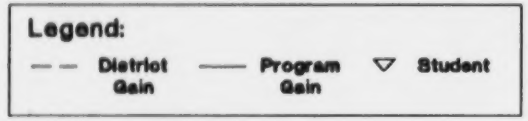
[2] Category definitions are based on District means and standard deviations for the term. The statistically inclined reader may wish to know that the "average" category is defined as the mean plus or minus one-half standard deviation, "low" and "high" categories are one standard deviation on either side of the average category, and "very high" and "very low" comprise all the remaining valid scores.

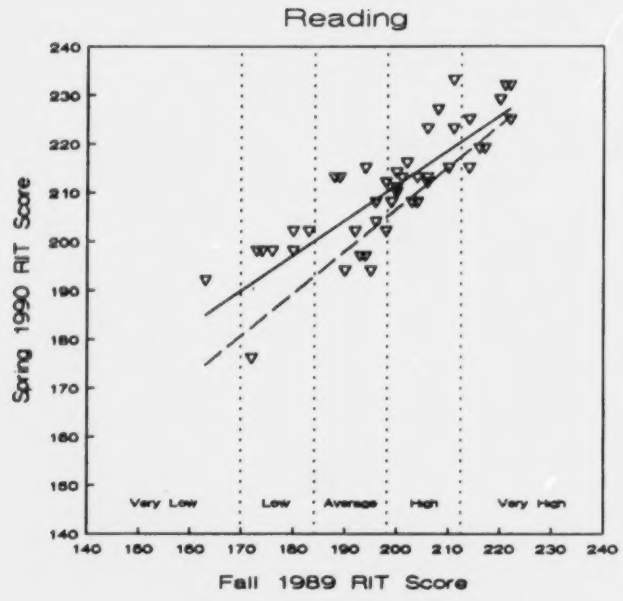
Figure 3

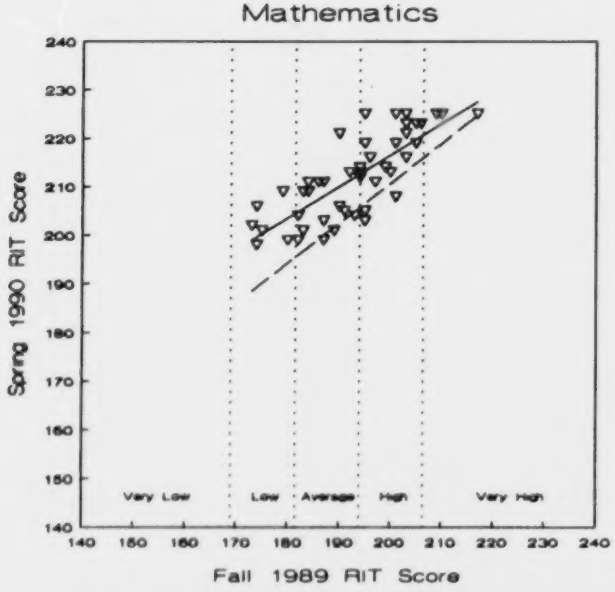
# Spanish Immersion Project

# 1989-1990 Grade 3

## Student RIT Gains by Subject



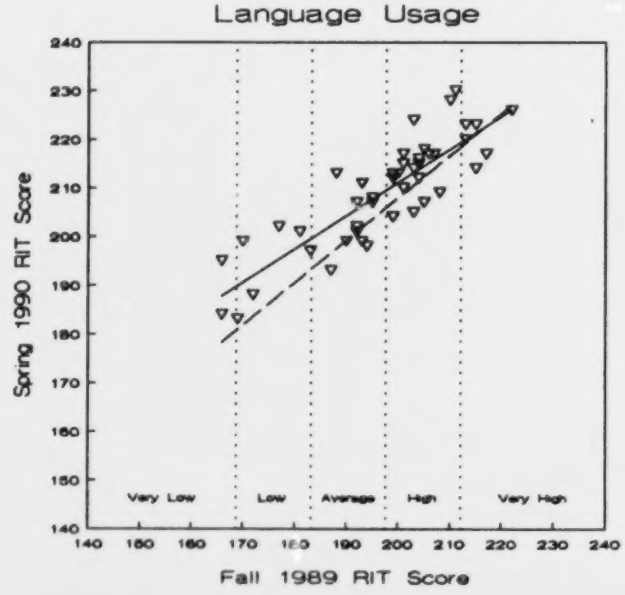
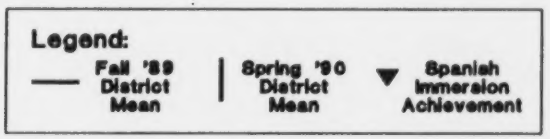



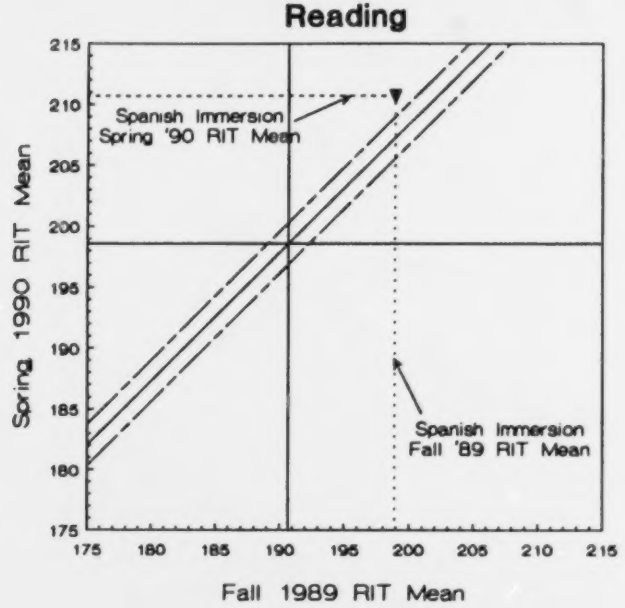
Figure 4

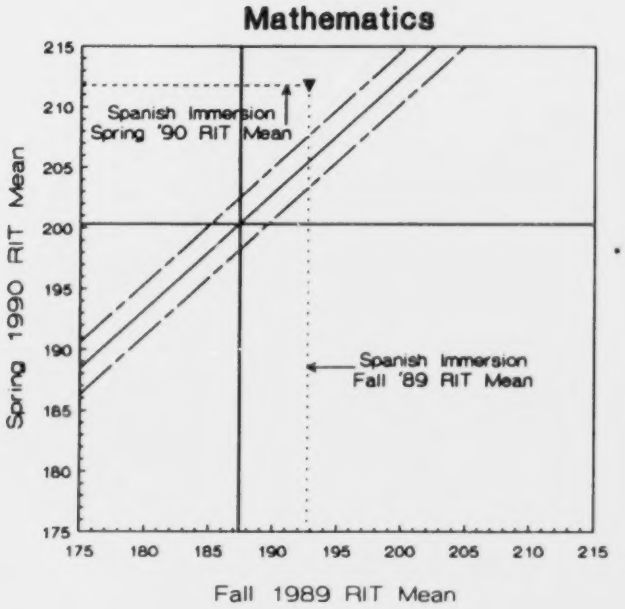
# Spanish Immersion Project

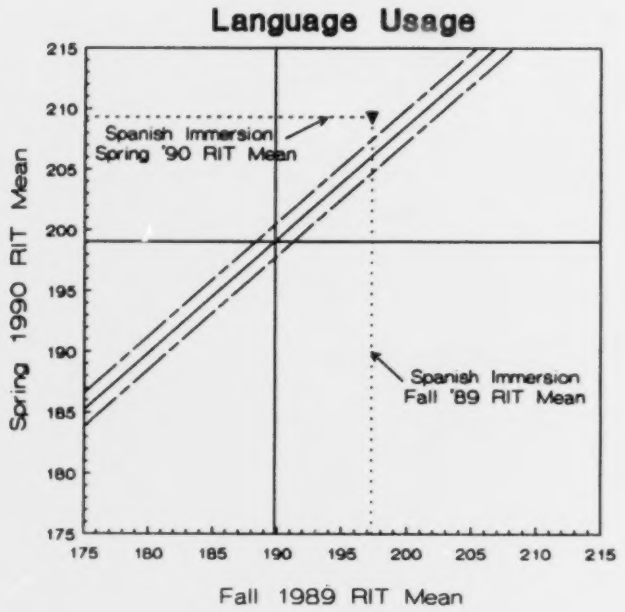
# 1989-1990 Grade 3

## Program RIT Gains by Subject



Levels Tests (PALT). Each dotted line represents the program's level of achievement relative to the District average and contains information on 1) the average Fall entering level of achievement, 2) the average spring level of achievement, and 3) the average gain of the grade. Three diagonal reference lines allow comparisons of the District average (solid line) and the standard error (dashed lines) to provide a measure of absolute gain in basic skills acquisition during the instructional year. The grade three Spanish Immersion Program students had a higher fall entering level of achievement, a higher average spring level of achievement, and made educationally important gains in all subjects.

**Spanish Language Acquisition**

This section reports on the development of the immersion students' oral language proficiency in speaking Spanish with appropriate pronunciation, reading Spanish materials written at appropriate skill levels, and writing the Spanish they can speak and understand. Data on the students' knowledge and appreciation of Hispanic culture is also reviewed.

Interviews and comments by the principal, instructional specialist, and classroom teachers in the program indicate that Immersion students improved their oral language proficiency as they progressed from grade to grade during 1989-90. These respondents especially noted the progress and fluency of grade three students with these comments.

> *This year the third graders seemed to have suddenly understood and really developed fluency in Spanish pronunciation and vocabulary.*
>
> *I have seen a marked, positive difference in our third grader's attitude about Spanish and about school in general.*
>
> *My third grade class shows more confidence in their Spanish.*
>
> *We have seen a remarkable turn around in our third grader this year. He has hit his stride and is much more enthusiastic about Spanish than in the past.*

During 1989-90, the focus of the Immersion Program was to review and identify measures for assessing students' Spanish oral language proficiency in the program. As requested by the principal, the evaluator and the curriculum coordinator conducted a study of assessment tools used to measure Spanish oral language acquisition in elementary school immersion programs throughout the country. Surveys were sent to 47 Spanish immersion and partial immersion programs requesting information on the type of tests, instruments, and assessment tools used to measure oral language proficiency. Eighteen districts or 38% of the programs responded to the survey.

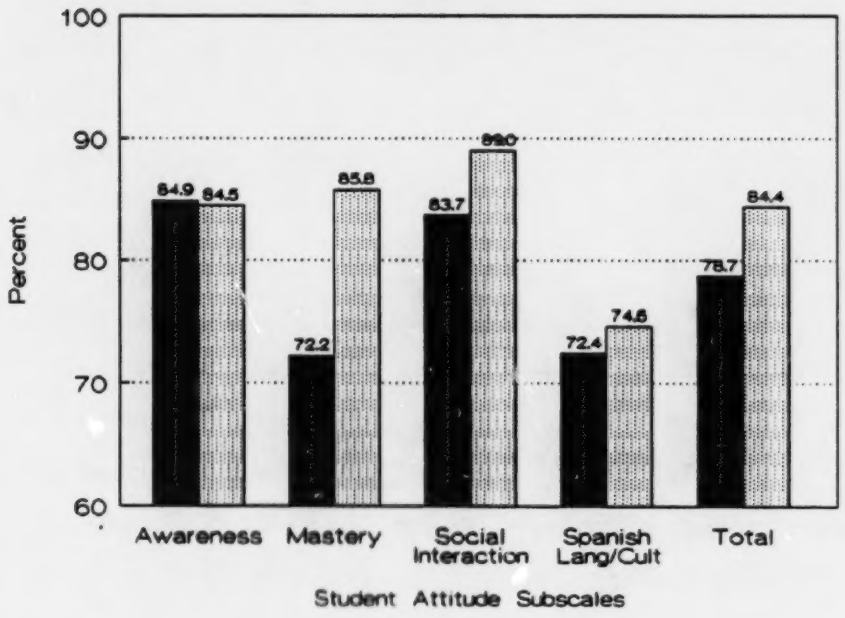
Many Spanish immersion programs used publishers' standardized tests, such as La Prueba, SABE, and Apprenda, to measure the development of second language skills in reading, mathematics, and language. Some districts had developed criterion-referenced tests to gauge student's proficiency in Spanish. Three districts provided information on language assessment rating scales and it was these instruments that kindled the most interest among the Immersion Program staff. After reviewing the findings, the principal and staff determined that two oral language rating systems seemed to match the needs and interests of the Spanish Partial Immersion Program: the Student Oral Proficiency Rating (SOPR) and the Center for Applied Linguistics' Oral Proficiency Exam (COPE). The program plans training and implementation of these measures during the 1990-91 year.

The This Is Me (TIM) student attitude survey was used to gather data on the students' increased knowledge and appreciation of Hispanic culture in first and second grade. This instrument measures students' skills in four categories: awareness, mastery, social interaction, and Spanish language and culture. The school's Child Development Specialist reads 45 statements to students and asks them to respond "yes" or "no." Students who might benefit from support services, such as guidance, counseling, or follow-up, were identified from the attitude survey results.

As displayed in Figure 5, Immersion Program students did improve their scores in mastery, social interaction, and Spanish language/culture from first grade to second grade. The awareness scores remained the same. Students showed the most gain in mastery from 72.2% in first grade to 85.8% in second grade. Knowledge and appreciation of Hispanic cultures, as measured by the Spanish scale, increased from 72.4% in first grade to 74.6% in second grade. Students have more information, understanding, and value for the Hispanic culture.

**Figure 5**

**Mean Percent on Student Attitude Scale (T.I.M.)**



## CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the evaluation show that Ainsworth Elementary School maintained a second language Spanish Partial Immersion Magnet Program during 1989-90 with a student enrollment of 205 students in kindergarten through grade three.

Immersion students maintained normal progress in achieving the objectives of the district's curriculum, as well as continued to develop an understanding of Spanish spoken at normal conversational rates, proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing Spanish, and an understanding and appreciation of other cultures.

The student attitude survey indicated that students improved their understanding and appreciation of the Hispanic culture. It also demonstrated that the students improved their knowledge, understanding, and respect for other cultures as they progressed from grade to grade.

The Spanish Partial Immersion Program appears to achieve its expected effect of developing proficiency in basic skills in both English and Spanish. One surprising and interesting finding from the data is the strong evidence that the Spanish Partial Immersion students have caught up and passed the district average in reading, mathematics, and language usage by third grade. Thus, the initial lag in the development of first language skills, seen in other immersion programs, was short-lived in this program. The program seems to have stimulated the students' basic skills development, especially in the area of mathematics. It seems that the students emerging language capabilities in Spanish supported and enriched their cognitive development in both languages. This finding supports the concept of interdependence between languages; common underlying language skills may facilitate and make possible the transfer of academic skills across languages.

The program established regular communications with parents to encourage their involvement and support. An active parent orientation program, advisory committee, and frequent educational/social meetings acquainted parents with key aspects of the school and immersion program. A regular newsletter provided informational updates on program activities and ways for parents to be involved in school issues.

The Spanish Partial Immersion Program reviewed and identified procedures for assessing Spanish oral language acquisition. It is understood that training and implementation of these processes will be conducted during 1990-91. The program should set annual expectations for student oral language acquisition and progress in Spanish. This might include an end-of-year review of students' oral language acquisition and joint planning for the next school year by the Spanish and English instructional teams. After these goals are defined, the immersion program planning committee, should begin to identify more extensive procedures for assessing the Spanish language acquisition of students during the middle school years.

The articulation of the Spanish Partial Immersion Program between elementary and middle school is recognized as a key issue by program staff, parents, the immersion planning committee, and the district. It is expected that the program will continue to work with these groups in developing an action plan for how students in the elementary Spanish Partial Immersion Program will be transitioned and integrated into the middle school immersion program in meaningful ways. This is an especially important issue to be addressed as the Spanish Immersion Program expands into middle school in 1992-93.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the evaluation, it is recommended that the Spanish Partial Immersion Program be continued and expanded as planned, and that:

1. The program continue to develop, refine, and implement a curriculum for Spanish language acquisition.

2. The program continue to annually monitor student progress in achieving objectives of the district's curriculum in English language basic skills in grades three through five.

3. The program establish and implement methods to monitor student progress annually in Spanish oral language acquisition in grades one through five.

4. The program continue to work towards setting annual expectations for student progress and oral language acquisition in Spanish. In the future, after these goals are defined, the immersion program committee should begin to identify more extensive procedures for assessing Spanish language acquisition at the middle school level in preparation for the expansion of the program into middle school.

5. The program continue to select students to ensure a student population that is representative of the different gender and ethnic groups in the district.

6. The program identify a contact person to maintain the Spanish immersion student data which tracks information on immersion students, such as student name, entry date, leave date, gender, ethnic group, and population group.

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## APPENDIX A

Sample Class Schedules by Grade

**AINSWORTH SCHOOL SPANISH PARTIAL IMMERSION PROGRAM ***

SAMPLE CLASS SCHEDULE

| GRADE | SAMPLE SPANISH SECTION OF THE DAY | | | | | SAMPLE ENGLISH SECTION OF THE DAY | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 8:30 | 9:00 | 9:30 | 10:00 | 10:30 | 11:00 | 11:30 | 12:15 | 12:45 | 1:15 | 1:45 | 2:15 | 2:45 |
| K | Opening/ Free Play | Mathematics | Language Arts | Music/ Library | Art/ PE | Social Studies | Lunch/ Recess | Opening/ Calendar | Language Arts | Language Arts | Art/ PE | Music | Science |
| 1 | Opening/ Calendar | Mathematics | Mathematics | Library | Science | Language Arts/Art | Lunch/ Recess | Oral Language | Spelling | Reading/ Activity | Social Studies | Writing Process | Reading |
| 2 | Review Calendar | Language/ Library | Mathematics | Mathematics/ Health | Science/ Music | Language Arts | Lunch/ Recess | Opening Calendar | Reading/ PE | Reading/ Writing | Social Studies | Language Arts/Art | Special Person |
| 3 | Music/ Writing | Calendar/ Art | Science | Mathematics | Mathematics | Language Arts/PE | Lunch/ Recess | Oral Language | Language Library | Language | Social Studies | Art/ PE | Read Aloud |

* Students receiving instruction in Spanish during the morning switch teachers and receive instruction in English in the afternoon. The class schedule is changed at mid-year so that students receiving Spanish instruction in the morning during the first half of the year, receive Spanish instruction in the afternoon during the second half of the year, and vice versa. The amount of available instructional time is equivalent for all students over the school year.

**APPENDIX B**

Parent Questionnaire

PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**SPANISH PARTIAL IMMERSION PROGRAM**
**PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

Your child is a student at Ainsworth School's Spanish Partial Immersion Program. This survey asks parents what you think of the program. Your answers are important; they will be considered in program operations. The survey is anonymous, so please do not sign your name.

If you have more than one child in the program, you may receive more than one form. Please complete only one form. Place the completed form in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope and return it to me in the mail as soon as possible. Thank you.

## PART 1 – SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS

1. What grade is your child in? (please circle all appropriate grades)

   K 1 2 3

2. Have you visited your child's classrooms this year during the school day?

   Yes___ No___

   If Yes, please describe your child's class participation._____
   _____
   _____

3. Has the project's staff informed you about program activities during the year?
   Yes___ No____

   Comments:_____
   _____
   _____

4. What types of school communication are most helpful? (check all that apply)

   ___Newsletters
   ___Teacher phone calls
   ___Parent/Teacher Conferences
   ___Home visits
   ___Notes from teachers
   ___Parent/student/staff activities
   ___Other_____

5. Which of these school functions did you attend this year? (check all that apply)

   ____Back-To-School Night
   ____Advisory Committee
   ____All-School Picnic
   ____Parent Spanish Classes
   ____Other (specify)_____
   ____PTA Meetings
   ____New Parents Tea
   ____Parent/Teacher Conferences
   ____Volunteer

(OVER)

## PART 2 -- ACADEMIC PROGRAM

6. How satisfied are you with your child's progress in learning the Spanish language?

| Very Satisfied | | | | Not Satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |

7. How satisfied are you with the basic skills program offered to your child (reading, writing and math)?

| Very Satisfied | | | | Not Satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |

8. How satisfied are you with other program components (music, physical education, library skills)?

| Very Satisfied | | | | Not Satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |

9. How optimistic are you that your child will be bilingual by the end of the program in grade 5?

| Very Optimistic | | | | Not Optimistic |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |

10. How comfortable is your child about being in the Spanish Immersion Program?

| Very Comfortable | | | | Not Comfortable |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |

11. My child feels good about school.

| Strongly Agree | | Undecided | | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |

12. I am satisfied with the Spanish Immersion instructional program.

| Strongly Agree | | Undecided | | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |

13. Does anyone in your home (other than your child) speak Spanish?

| Very Well | | Enough to get by | | Not at all |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |

14. Please add any comments regarding the Spanish Immersion Program._____

_____

_____

_____

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.**

## APPENDIX C

Summary of Parent Questionnaire Responses

**SPANISH PARTIAL IMMERSION PROGRAM**
**Executive Summary of Parent Questionnaire (N = 199)**
May 1990

1. What grade is your child in?

| Kindergarten | Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| N=52 | N=47 | N=48 | N=52 |

2. Have you visited your child's classrooms this year during the school day?

| | Number | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 153 | 77% |
| No | 46 | 23% |

3. Has the project's staff informed you about program activities during the year?

| | Number | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 182 | 91% |
| No | 17 | 9% |

4. What types of school communications are most helpful? (check all that apply)

| | Number | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Newsletters | 181 | 91% |
| Parent/Teacher Conferences | 173 | 87% |
| Notes from teachers | 159 | 80% |
| Teacher phone calls | 109 | 55% |
| Parent/student/staff activity | 81 | 41% |
| Other | 16 | 8% |
| Home visits | 3 | 2% |

5. Which school functions did you attend this year? (check all that apply)

| | Number | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Parent/Teacher Conferences | 172 | 86% |
| Back-To-School Night | 144 | 72% |
| All-School Picnic | 125 | 63% |
| School Volunteer | 125 | 63% |
| PTA Meetings | 52 | 26% |
| Parent Spanish Classes | 51 | 26% |
| Advisory Committee | 35 | 18% |
| New Parents Tea | 16 | 8% |
| Other: | 50 | 25% |
| Cultural Night | 16 | |
| Buckaroo Night | 26 | |
| Health/Fitness Fair | 19 | |
| Talent Show | 10 | |

6. How satisfied are you with your child's progress in learning Spanish?

| | Very Satisfied | | | | Not Satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | 88 | 78 | 27 | 5 | 1 |
| % | 44% | 39% | 14% | 2% | 1% |

7. How satisfied are you with the basic skills program offered to your child (reading, writing and math)?

| | Very Satisfied | | | | Not Satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | 83 | 81 | 27 | 7 | 1 |
| % | 42% | 40% | 14% | 3% | 1% |

8. How satisfied are you with other program components (music, physical education, library skills)?

| | Very Satisfied | | | | Not Satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | 89 | 86 | 18 | 4 | 2 |
| % | 45% | 43% | 9% | 2% | 1% |

9. How optimistic are you that your child will be bilingual by the end grade 5?

| | Very Optimistic | | | | Not Optimistic |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | 86 | 63 | 32 | 11 | 7 |
| % | 43% | 32% | 16% | 5% | 4% |

10. How comfortable is your child about being in the Spanish Immersion Program?

| | Very Comfortable | | | | Not Comfortable |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | 116 | 59 | 18 | 2 | 4 |
| % | 58% | 30% | 9% | 1% | 2% |

11. My child feels good about school.

| | Strongly Agree | | Undecided | | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | 96 | 74 | 22 | 4 | 3 |
| % | 48% | 37% | 11% | 2% | 2% |

12. I am satisfied with the Spanish Immersion instructional program.

| | Strongly Agree | | Undecided | | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | 94 | 71 | 30 | 2 | 2 |
| % | 47% | 36% | 15% | 1% | 1% |

13. Does anyone in your home (other than your child) speak Spanish?

| | Very Well | | Enough to get by | | Not at all |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | 26 | 20 | 24 | 63 | 66 |
| % | 13% | 10% | 12% | 32% | 33% |

**Summary of Parents' Comments**

2. Describe your child's participation when you visited the classrooms this year.

37 My child was interested, attentive and involved. Songs and other learning activities were fostering communication in Spanish.
12 My child participated well in all activities.
11 My child was attentive with average participation.
9 Child showed good understanding in English and Spanish classes.
8 Quiet and shy, but responsive; does not like to interrupt others.
8 Child was hesitant, not secure in Spanish yet.
5 Child was great in English, but quiet in Spanish.
4 We talked about careers and special interests during Super-Kid Week.
4 Child participated in field trip.
3 Child participated more and seemed more comfortable in English program.
5 Child asked questions and readily volunteered in class.
2 Child followed directions.
2 Child helped others (teachers and students).
2 I don't know Spanish, so I can't comment.
2 Child acted out because of parents' presence in class.
2 Child speaks Spanish well at school, but never at home.
1 Child had attention problems in group activities.
1 Child did better in morning Spanish than afternoon.

3. Has the project's staff informed you about program activities during the year?

16 Yes, excellent communication from all teachers. We are very well informed with planned lessons, cultural themes, all-school notices, and weekly bulletins.
14 No, need more weekly/monthly communication.
7 Fair amount of communication.
7 Good, regular newsnotes are very helpful.
6 Need more advance notification of curriculum units and planned activities.
6 Need information on vocabulary/math/science lessons to reinforce at home.
3 Need words (or tapes) of the Spanish songs.
2 Messages sent home with children are not always received.
1 Need more frequent and longer parent-teacher conferences.

4. What other types of school communications are most helpful?

4 More Spanish Immersion parent meetings (potlucks, social, or instructional).
2 Parent observations and volunteering.
2 Monthly goals and activity schedules in the newsheet.
1 Notes from teachers on successes and specific problems.
1 Bi-monthly question and answer periods for parents, so we know what goes into planning, what worries and doesn't.
1 Put important notes in a special large carrier or something.

5. What other school functions did you attend this year?

4 Festivals, socials, and parties.
3 Field Trips.
2 Informal parent/teacher conferences.
2 Plays by Spanish community and classes.
2 Preparing for the Drug (Free) Years seminars.
2 Mini class, art class helper.
1 Super kid week
1 Kindergarten orientation, and Bookfair.
1 Substitute teaching in Spanish Immersion Program.
1 Advocates for language learning.
1 Specific issue meetings, e.g., Spanish in Middle school.

14. Additional comments regarding the Spanish Immersion Program.

**POSITIVE COMMENTS**

30 Very pleased the program is available for our children.
25 The program is good or excellent.
17 Teachers are good or exceptional.
6 Good communication from the teachers.
5 Learning about for Hispanic cultures is wonderful.
4 I am not informed enough to make assessment.
3 Child likes program.
3 Student has good accent, but little vocabulary.
3 Program was difficult at onset, but time has helped.
1 Communication between Spanish and English teachers is important.
1 Parent Spanish classes are wonderful.
1 Parent participation good.
1 Wonderful use of music/songs.
1 Has given our child pride in Hispanic heritage.
1 Whole family is excited by program.

**AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

5 Volunteered to help, but was never called upon.
3 Use more positive reinforcement of class, not negative handling of individuals.
3 Teachers could use more fun thinking skills activities vs. boring acting out.
2 Some teachers and students are not open to children of different cultures.
2 Teachers did not return parent phone calls.
2 Students do not understand instructions in Spanish.
1 Math and spelling program is poor.
1 Child dislikes the program.
1 Busing is the only problem; child cannot participate in after-school activities.
1 Immersion students are sometimes labeled as troublemakers.
1 I am uneasy with the "one school" concept.
1 Too much busy work and free play for students.
1 Cost of some activities is prohibitive.

14. Additional comments (continued)

**SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS**

26 Continue the program through middle school and high school.
10 Need more Hispanic culture programs; focus on other Spanish-speaking countries, not just Mexico.
6 Need more one-to-one interaction and small groups for better participation.
5 Would like more information on progress of students.
3 Would like more parent-teacher conferences.
3 Need a summer program.
3 This shouldn't be a magnet school; it isolates students from their neighborhood.
3 Parent support group would be helpful.
2 Would like to see a more creative atmosphere.
2 More communications for non Spanish-speaking parents.
2 More attention to reading and writing in Spanish.
2 Use more Spanish language instruction with drills and recitations.
2 Would like access to materials (tapes/books) for use at home.
2 Full time immersion would be better.
2 Develop a friendship program with the Hispanic community.
1 English teachers should have teacher aides also.
1 Classrooms need more materials.
1 Need more science instruction.
1 Need more math problem solving instruction.
1 Teachers need more early childhood education & child management training.
1 Put less emphasis on basic skills in Kindergarten.
1 Would like more academic studies beginning in first grade.
1 Would like native Spanish-speaking teachers.
1 Would like home visits.

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